

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 017553 POSS DUPE
ORIGIN EA-09

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EA/P:MSMITH
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O P 261812Z JAN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017553

FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, US

SUBJECT: LPDR-IMPOSED CEILING ON AMERICAN PERSONNEL IN
VIENTIANE

REF: VIENTIANE 134 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. FOLLOWING IS PRESS GUIDANCE WHICH HAS BEEN DEVELOPED
FOR USE BY DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN ON "IF ASKED" BASIS:

Q: HAVE THE LAO ASKED US TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF OUR
EMBASSY PERSONNEL IN VIENTIANE?

A: YES, THE LAO MFA HAS ASKED THAT WE REDUCE OUR AMERICAN
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STAFF TO 12. WE ARE NOW TAKING STEPS TO DRAW DOWN OUR
EMBASSY FROM ITS PRESENT LEVEL OF 24 AMERICANS TO 12 AS
REQUESTED BY THE LAO.

2. Q: WHY ARE LAO DOING THIS?

A: YOU WILL HAVE TO ASK THE LAO.

Q: DO THEY HAVE THE RIGHT TO SET A CEILING ON OUR PERSONNEL?

YES. THE 1961 VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS PERMITS A RECEIVING STATE TO "REQUIRE THAT THE SIZE OF A MISSION BE KEPT WITHIN LIMITS CONSIDERED BY IT TO BE REASONABLE AND NORMAL."

Q: DID THE LAO SET A TIME LIMIT ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF HALF OF OUR MISSION IN LAOS?

A: NO. THE LAO DID REQUEST THAT WE REDUCE OUR PERSONNEL WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME. AS I INDICATED, WE ARE DOING SO.

Q: HOW MANY LAO ARE IN THE LAO EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON?

A: THE LAO EMBASSY HERE HAS A STAFF OF 2.

Q: WHAT EFFECT WILL THIS LAO REQUEST HAVE ON U.S.-LAO RELATIONS?

A: NONE.

Q: HAS THE LAO GOVERNMENT SET A CEILING ON THE SIZE OF ANY OTHER EMBASSIES?

A: I DO NOT KNOW.
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2. FOR VIENTIANE: YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO USE ABOVE GUIDANCE WITH PRESS ON "IF ASKED" BASIS." YOU MAY NOW DRAW ON ABOVE PRESS GUIDANCE AS APPROPRIATE IN BRIEFING FRIENDLY FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN VIENTIANE AND YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO INFORM LOCAL EMPLOYEES OF LAO REQUEST AND OF CONSEQUENT REDUCTIONS EMBASSY WILL BE MAKING.

3. FOR INFO ADDRESSEES: YOU MAY DRAW ON ABOVE PRESS GUIDANCE AS APPROPRIATE IN BRIEFING HOST GOVERNMENT AND FRIENDLY FOREIGN EMBASSIES.

4. FYI FOR INFO ADDRESSEES: LAO NOTE OF JANUARY 17 STATES THAT THEY ARE PUTTING CEILING OF 12 AMERICANS ON OUR EMBASSY STAFF IN VIENTIANE IN CONFORMITY WITH PRINCIPLES OF EQUALITY AND RECIPROCITY AND BECAUSE LPDR CONSIDERS THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN LPDR AND US ARE "PURELY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS." LAO NOTE MAKESPLAIN THAT NO PERSONNEL OF "MILITARY CHARACTER" MAY REMAIN IN VIENTIANE, SO MARINE

SECURITY DETACHMENT WILL BE WITHDRAWN ALONG WITH SOME
OTHER MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF. OUR EMBASSY IN VIENTIANE
DELIVERED OUR REPLY TO LAO REQUEST TO REDUCE MISSION ON
JANUARY 25. WE ARE NOW WORKING ON REVISED STAFFING
PATTERN FOR EMBASSY VIENTIANE AND HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH
REDUCTIONS FROM 24 TO 12 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. END FYI.
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